

Environmental Management

A Periodic Update on Rocky Flats Cleanup



March/April 1995

EG&G ROCKY FLATS

New waste storage facility opens

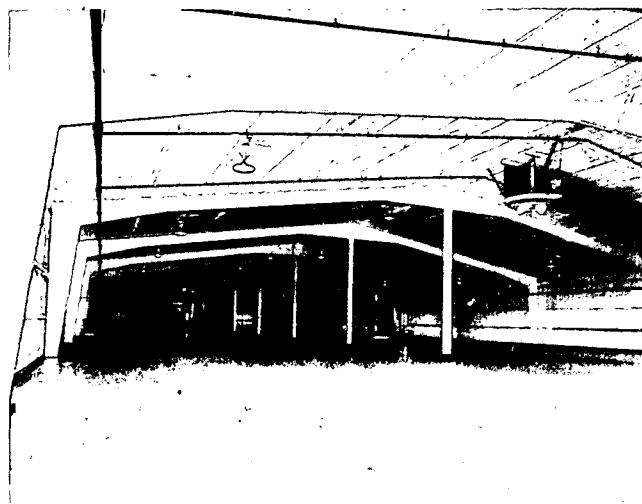
The 25,000 square-foot Centralized Waste Storage Facility, designed to allow hazardous, low-level and low-level mixed waste storage at Rocky Flats to be consolidated under one roof, opened for business in February. The pre-engineered metal building, located near the site's southeast corner, will house some 5200 cubic yards of packaged solid waste and will be the staging area for the shipment of waste to the Envirocare permitted disposal site in Utah.

The new \$3.4 million facility, designated Building 906, was dedicated by DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental

Management Thomas Grumbly, who noted that the project was completed five months ahead of schedule, and \$500,000 under budget.

The centralization and streamlining of waste storage at Rocky Flats is expected to save even more money, according to Keith Klein, Rocky Flats Field Office Acting Deputy Manager. Said Klein; "With this

facility, we can store, track, inspect and ship wastes safer, more



The cavernous interior of Building 906, the new Centralized Waste Storage Facility.

efficiently and more expediently than we could before."

New sanitary landfill taking shape

A huge pile of dirt has recently become visible on the Rocky Flats horizon, the only indicator to casual observers of the equally-huge hole that will soon be the catch basin for the site's most profuse and least problematic waste stream—the combination of office trash, construction debris and other useless but safely-buriable material commonly called solid sanitary waste.

The football stadium-sized excavation is the new Rocky Flats Sanitary Landfill. It is located not far from the old one, northwest of the site's industrial area, and will appear much the same to the uneducated eye. But the new landfill

is different in several respects, and these differences will make it more environmentally friendly than its predecessor.

Like the Jefferson County Landfill a few miles to the south, the new Rocky Flats disposal facility is legally bound to accept only waste that can safely be buried without treatment. But as a newly-permitted landfill, this latest version of "the dump" must meet stricter inspection and restoration standards than its older neighbor.

For example, waste to be buried will undergo no fewer than three different inspections to ensure that no metals, chemicals, batteries or

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DOIT program demos prove popular

The catchy phrase, "Just Do It!" presumably helps the Nike Corporation sell a lot of shoes. Hoping for similar success, program managers at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site have attached a version of this slogan to a new waste treatment initiative. "Just DOIT" is the line, and DOIT stands for Develop On-site Innovative Technologies. The program that goes with this appropriately proactive acronym is aimed directly at mixed waste management problems.

The DOIT Program, as reported in the June/July issue of EM Update, is a joint initiative by the Departments of Energy, Defense and Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Western Governors' Association to identify and develop promising waste treatment technologies through a series of demonstration projects at DOE sites in the western U.S. These sites account for 95 percent of the country's mixed waste.

Nine technologies were earmarked

for full-scale demonstration, and Rocky Flats played host to two of them: Microwave Solidification and Low Temperature Thermal Desorption. Both of these methods have proven effective on a smaller scale for treating mixed waste.

The hardware was assembled for both technologies early this year, and initial test runs took place in March. Two workshops and demonstrations of the technologies were held, on March 23 and April 6. Both events were well-attended by regulators, technology developers, representatives from other DOE sites and local and national stakeholders.

Input from both technical experts and stakeholders will help determine whether these possible waste treatment options can "do it" to mixed waste at sites like Rocky Flats.

If you would like more information about the DOIT program, call Carla Sanda, EG&G Community Relations, at (303) 966-2011.

THE TECHNOLOGIES

In the Microwave Solidification process, a microwave generator heats waste sludge to a temperature in excess of 1000°C, fusing the waste into a stable, dry solid. A silicon filler, called frit, is first combined with the waste, and the mixture is then heated to the melting point in its original waste drum. The resulting glasslike material is free of liquid and capable of isolating contaminated substances from the environment.

Low Temperature Thermal Desorption, a proven treatment for contaminated soil and sludge, will be tested on other types of combustible mixed waste such as clothing and rubber gloves. The desorption process uses a much lower temperature (100°C) to "desorb", or drive off, volatile organic compounds. Material treated in this way is no longer characterized as mixed waste, thus it is safer to store and dispose of.

Proposed Site Treatment Plan Workshop

A Mixed Waste Management Workshop to explain mixed waste issues and treatment options will be held in April in conjunction with the 60-day public comment period on the Proposed Site Treatment Plan. The proposed plan, the third and final version of this blueprint for the sitewide management of mixed waste, was released in March. A formal public comment meeting will follow in May. Watch for dates and locations in upcoming community advisories and local newspapers, or call Becca DePenning, EG&G Community Relations, at (303) 966-7050.

NEPA Notes: A report on current National Environmental Policy Act issues at Rocky Flats

Draft Actinide Environmental Assessment Issued

The DOE has released the draft Environmental Assessment on Actinide Solution Processing at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site. The document is being prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the proposed action of draining these solutions from their containers, removing the radioactive solids and converting them to safely-storable forms.

The public comment period for this document ended March 21, 1995. Copies of the document are still available for review in the Reading Rooms (See Page 4). For information about this EA, contact Gary Schuetz, Operations and Waste Management Division, U.S.

Department of Energy Rocky Flats Field Office, at (303) 966-3016.

SWEIS Update

The Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement continues to evolve. The public response document, address-ing comments gathered during the scoping process, is available for review in the Reading Rooms. The SWEIS Implementation Plan, which describes the alternatives to be considered in the SWEIS and contains an outline of the SWEIS, has been submitted to DOE Head-quarters for review, with approval expected within a few weeks. For more information about the SWEIS, call Tricia Powell, DOE Project Manager, at (303) 966-3260, or call the SWEIS Hotline at 1-800-801-2026.

OU2 PAM released

A Proposed Action Memorandum (PAM) detailing remediation actions for Trench 3, one of the Individual Hazardous Substance Sites (IHSS) in Operable Unit 2, has been released to the EPA, the CDPHE and the general public for comment.

Trench 3 contains floating organic compounds such as gasoline and diesel fuel. The Trench 3 PAM proposes a method for pumping these liquids from the trench. Removal of these compounds, which would be shipped offsite for disposal, is seen as a necessary remediation step that

will reduce the risk of contaminants migrating into the Walnut Creek drainage.

The public comment period on the PAM will run through April 18, 1995. A final version, incorporating public and regulator input, is scheduled for submission to the EPA and the CDPHE for approval on May 5.

Remediation of Trench 3 is proceeding under an accelerated schedule which should lead to completion of the floating organic liquid removal operation sometime

this fiscal year, almost five years ahead of the original Interagency Agreement milestone.

Copies of the PAM are available in Metro-area reading rooms. Written comments may be sent to Mike Konczal, DOE Office of Communications and Economic Development, P.O. Box 928, Golden, CO 80402-0928. If you would like more information, call Eileen Jemison, EG&G Community Relations, at (303) 966-2302.

New landfill taking shape — continued from Page 1

other hazardous castoffs make their way into the new landfill. Loads of trash will be sorted inside a specially-designed facility, where non-disposables and recyclables can be removed before the inspected rubbish is compacted into 60 cubic-foot bales for trailering to an assigned and documented burial "cell". To ferret out possible radiological contamination, trash trucks will drive through a sensitive gamma/neutron detector, and radiation control technicians will give the sorted refuse a final sweep

with alpha monitors before baling.

The burial site itself is a very sophisticated hole in the ground. The entire excavation is lined with a two-foot-thick "bathtub" of impermeable clay, topped by two separate synthetic liners with an electronic leak detection system sandwiched between them, all designed to contain possible leachates. A drainage network located just above the liner at the bottom of the waste cell carries leachates to storage tanks, where they are tested and either treated or

sprayed back onto the landfill. An evaporation pond will handle surface water runoff from the site. The bales will be covered daily to keep odors in and scavengers out.

The new landfill exceeds all state and federal regulations, and according to EG&G Project Manager Don Mittlestadt, "This facility will let us handle our own sanitary waste for the next 20 years without the cost and liability problems associated with shipping it offsite."

OU15 proposed plan finalized

The Final Phase I RCRA Facility Investigation/Remedial Investigation Report for Operable Unit 15, allowing Rocky Flats to pursue closeout of the project without an Interim Measure/Interim Remedial Action plan, has received approval from the state of Colorado. Rich Ray is EG&G's project manager for this indoor OU, which includes areas inside Buildings 865, 881, 883 and 447, and his hope is that OU15 can follow the lead of OU16—closure with no remedial activity. "No

contamination has been discovered in the areas, so we don't anticipate doing anything beyond the scope of the regular radiation control program," said Ray.

The OU15 areas were all used for storage except for Building 447, which housed a uranium chip roaster.

Eliminating the IM/IRA step will speed up the OU15 timetable by at least two months, meaning that final closure could occur by the end of 1995.

FEEDBACK

Let us know what you think about this Update.

Fax or mail your comments, questions or suggestions to:

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Public Invited to Use Reading Rooms

The following reading rooms contain current information, technical reports, and reference documents on environmental restoration at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site:

Rocky Flats Plant Reading Room*

Front Range Community College Library
3645 West 112th Avenue
Level B, Center of Building
Westminster, Colorado 80030
(303) 469-4435

Hours:

Monday – Tuesday 10:30 AM – 6:30 PM
Wednesday 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Thursday – Friday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Citizen's Advisory Board

9035 Wadsworth Parkway
Suite 2250
Westminster, Colorado 80021
(303) 420-7855

Hours:

Monday – Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

EPA Superfund Records Center*

999 18th Street, Suite 500
Denver, Colorado 80202-2405
(303) 293-1807

Hours:

Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment*

Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Dr. South, Bldg. A
Denver, Colorado 80222-1530
(303) 692-3312

Hours:

Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Standley Lake Library

8485 Kipling Street
Arvada, Colorado 80005
(303) 423-4600

Hours:

Monday – Friday 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
Friday – Saturday 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Sunday 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

United States Department of Energy Freedom of Information and Privacy Branch Office

1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585
(202) 586-6025

Hours:

Monday – Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
(Eastern Time Zone)

***Information Repository**

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